

Serving the Afghanistan Engineer District - South

Engineering Freedom

May/June 2010



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of Engineers®
Afghanistan Engineer District - South



**Airfield project
improves support
to Warfighters**

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All photographs appearing herein are by the AES Public Affairs Office unless otherwise accredited.

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On the cover ...

Jim Myers (center), lead QA representative (deployed from the Corps' Savanna District), and Mike Weiner (right), resident engineer, explain the importance of engineered fill controls at the landing strip extension area at Tarin Kowt Airfield to Kayhan Suhrab (right), Kandahar Constructors CQC Manager. See story on page 10. (Photo by Patricia Ryan)



Commander's message ...

Over the past nine months, I have witnessed the transformation of the Kandahar Program Office into the Afghanistan Engineer District – South. It has been rewarding to watch the transformation, and I realize there are a lot of folks who work very hard every day to make it a success.

Aside from standing up the District, we have four key tasks to execute; the Military Construction (MILCON) program, the Afghanistan National Security Force (ANSF) program, the Real Estate procurement for U.S. Forces and infrastructure development projects. MILCON is by far the largest segment of our overall program followed by the ANSF work. The work we currently do with real estate procurement directly impacts the Coalition Forces success in the counter insurgency (COIN) fight. The program that is only now starting to take off is the infrastructure development in RC-South and RC-West; it boils down to roads, water and power. The exciting thing is that AES plays a key role in infrastructure development. As the MILCON program draws down, we will see the infrastructure program increase.

The initial investment in Afghanistan's infrastructure was made post World War II with such projects as Kajaki and Dalha dams, the Helmand River Valley irrigation system, and the ring road that connects the nation. Thirty years of war have left much of Afghanistan's infrastructure in a state of neglect, and has prevented any sort of modernization to meet growing demands. The irony is we are coming full circle. AES in support of ISAF and in partnership with agencies such as the Asian Development Bank and USAID are poised to start work on the infrastructure we helped build.

Our involvement with the infrastructure program has started small. We have taken on some small Commander's Emergency Response Programs (CERPs) in support of the 5/2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team to conducting a study

on the potential to immediately increase the power in Kandahar City with diesel electric generators. The importance of the study really showed diesel electric was not sustainable and we needed to act now on more sustainable options.

So what's on the horizon for us? We have a number of road projects in the development phase, everything from small low-water crossings, to bridge rehabs; to larger projects like the Kandahar City by-pass road and the Panjuway bridge on the west side of Kandahar. The real big project looming on the horizon is the Laman to Qaysar Highway 1 road project. It is the upgrade of the final 310 km. leg of the national ring road in RC-West, and considered the "signature road" project for all of Afghanistan by both GIRoA and ISAF. Completion of this road opens economic opportunities to the industrial region of Herat, natural resource deposits such as coal, as well as agricultural markets for produce grown in the Helmand and Argandab valleys. The Asian Development Bank is the sponsor of the project and we have worked with them since November 2009 when they were approached about executing the project. An investment of this magnitude in an area as challenging as this from both a physical as well as security standpoint is not something you rush into. We continue to work with the senior levels of the Asian Development Bank as they weigh the risk verses the benefits of the project. On the power side, working with RC-South, the Regional [interagency] Platform-South and USAID we are developing



Col. Kevin J. Wilson

a strategy to upgrade the electrical distribution in Kandahar City, the electrical transmission lines and substations from Kajaki Dam as well as some day upgrading Kajaki dam itself. This is about partnering with different agencies and leveraging each other strengths in order to make a difference in the lives of the Afghan people.

AES has a very bright future in Afghanistan. And we have a lot of to offer the coalition COIN strategy that will set Afghanistan on a course for prosperity, which will ultimately drive to a more secure nation. We can all be proud and excited about making a difference.

Inshala 🇦🇫

Command Sergeant Major's message ...

During this month's article, I would like to mention a number of things that sometimes we, who live in this environment don't take time to notice because of our busy schedule, or maybe because we don't think they are important or relevant to us or our needs.

First being the Compound build out. I can't think of anything harder than building for yourself, life support infrastructure in a combat zone while you are supporting the warfighter, your primary responsibility.

Think back to where we were here on KAF in August 2009 when we became a District. What we had here, how many people we had on the ground, what we had to accomplish in short order to get things moving. Now, ten months later, look around, not only the physical changes, which have been huge, but all the people on the ground now, supporting the fight.

Through the hard work of all of us and a lot who have already rotated home, we have transformed our "little piece of paradise" into a Compound that has three permanent structures occupied, two more



Command Sgt. Maj. John S. Werner

that are under construction, and will be occupied by the end of May, and two more large concrete two-story buildings that will occupy the center of our Compound, at present ready for the bidding process. All of this doesn't even take into account all the ancillary work that's taken place. Power generation, temporary tentage, sewage lines, water lines, communication lines, constant moving of offices to accommodate new "growth" personnel, storage, new bunkers, and new blast walls, and yes, the addition and placement of picnic tables around the Compound.

It's hard to believe, but we've

come a long way. We still have a long way to go. But I believe the light at the end of the tunnel is daylight, and not the proverbial train.

As "plank holders" in this effort you have a right to be proud of what we have accomplished here to date.

Simply said – "A great effort."

Second, I have talked often about Ramp Ceremonies and the meaning of the National Colors being at Half Staff in our Compound. To you all as a group and to you as individuals, I have talked about the meaning behind the Ramp Ceremony.

That it is a small, but very meaningful ceremony in which we as fellow Soldiers', as Americans, say goodbye to a fallen comrade and honor them as we send them home to their grief stricken families', and how we as a Nation show respect for the ultimate sacrifice offered in her defense. It is a fitting ceremony for those who answered their Nation's Call to Arms.

I encourage all of you to attend a Ramp Ceremony (yes, there will be more), participate – render honors by placing your hand over your

heart, at the times that the Uniform Services salute. I promise you, you cannot come away from these, without being emotionally moved.

It puts in perspective what we do here, no matter your job, but why you are here, as part of the Nation's defense.

No matter how hectic, demanding, mundane or dull you may think your job is, next time you see the National Colors at Half Staff, stop and think about what it represents. Take the time to find out when the Ceremony will be and come and participate. Encourage those around you to take the time to come and honor a fallen warrior. The finest this Nation has to offer. A son or daughter who willingly raised their hand and volunteered to defend all that we all hold dear.

And lastly, I would like

to expand on something I mentioned in my last column, that being, "watching out for our fellow Corps family."

The job here is difficult enough without having to deal with the added stress of family separation, illness, and or future employment opportunities.

None of us can walk life's path alone. We all need help from time to time. Sometimes, we may not even know we need help. By observation and communication we can keep everyone connected. For those who have been here awhile and we know, we can notice changes in their behavior or work. For the new personnel who join us, it's a little different, and can be more challenging, but still can be done. Go up to them and welcome them, help them

with information, ask about their families (we all love to talk about our loved ones), and where they come from. Invite them to eat with you, help them settle in. Mainly, welcome them into our family here. Help them to feel part of the team.

In closing, I would like to briefly explain the closing phrase I have used many times over the years "See you on the high Ground." It's meant in a positive light and reflects the attitude that everything is possible! Always moving forward, accomplishing all tasks assigned and exceeding all goals.

Thanks to you all for your commitment to duty and your companionship, as we move down the "trail" together toward the high ground!

See you all on top! 🇺🇸



Afghanistan Engineer District - South team members honor two fallen comrades, Adam B. Spain and Ryan P. Lozier, at a Memorial Ceremony May 9 at Fraise Chapel, Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan (see pages 6 and 7).

In remembrance of...



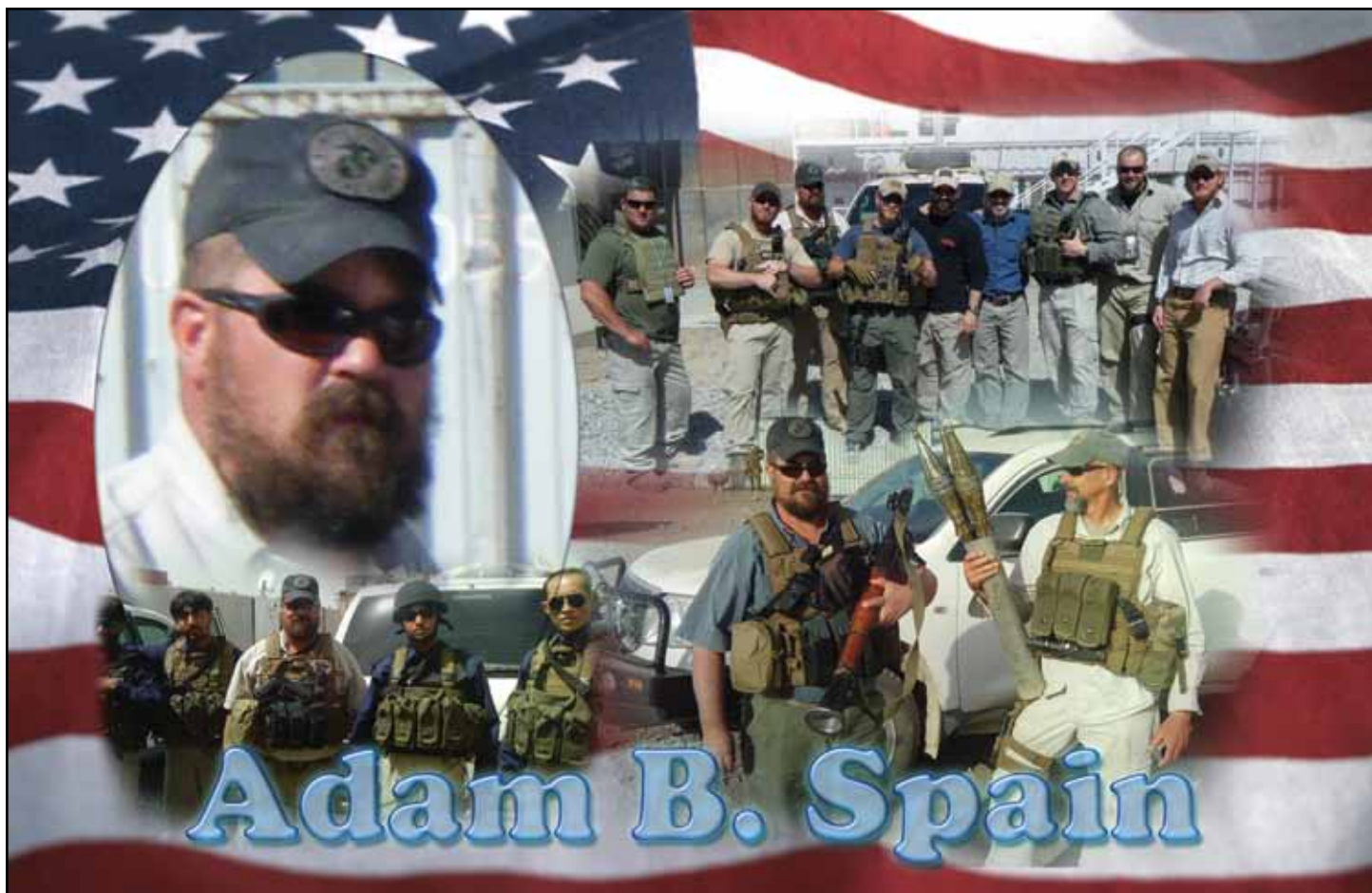
Ryan Lozier joined the U.S. Army after completing high school in Middletown, Ohio, in 1999. After graduating from Basic and Advanced training and attending Airborne School, he was assigned to the 1st Ranger Battalion at Hunter Army Airfield in Georgia. As an Infantryman, Ryan was a veteran of multiple deployments to Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2002 to 2006. After multiple combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, Ryan went on to serve as a Ranger Instructor at Fort Benning, Ga., in the 4th Ranger Training Battalion. Ryan left the Army in 2006.

After the Army, Ryan began a career as a security contractor and performed security missions in both Iraq and Afghanistan for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a Security Specialist for Munitions Clearance Teams, the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment as a Targeting

and Reconnaissance Specialist, the Department of Energy as a Transportation and Security Movement Specialist, and for Global Strategies Group as a Team Leader and Operations Specialist for Reconstruction Security Support Services to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Afghanistan.

For those who knew him, Ryan was a friend, a professional and staunch patriot. His life, both in and out of uniform, symbolized what he had taken to be his mission and profession - the protection of the country and of others. In keeping with the motto of the Ranger Regiment, whose motto is "Rangers, Lead The Way!," for those who worked with him as a soldier or as a civilian it can be said that Ryan did in fact – Lead the Way!

Adam Spain was a native son of Chattanooga, Tennessee. After completing high school there, he



enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and was assigned to Camp Le Juene, N.C. During his time in the Marine Corps, Adam served as a rifleman and as a Special Security Force member, responsible for the security of nuclear weapons for the U.S. Department of the Navy in Great Britain. Adam was a proud member of the Marine Corps from 1984-1988.

After a short break in service, Adam joined the U.S. Army, and was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky., as a weapons specialist. During his time with the 101st, Adam deployed on numerous CONUS and OCONUS operations from 1989 to 1993.

Adam left military service in 1993 and entered the construction trades where he worked as a tradesman in the United States as well as for construction companies performing work in Afghanistan, China and India. Adam joined Global Strategies Group and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Reconstruction Security Support Services project as a Security Liaison Team, Team Engineer in February, 2010.

For those who knew Adam, he was the



AES Commander Col. Kevin Wilson (left) and Command Sgt. Maj. John Werner (right) honor both fallen comrades.

consummate team player, a true Southern gentleman and a dedicated friend. Adam was the type who constantly looked to help others, rarely complained, expected little in return, and always thought the best of people. 🇺🇸



Charrette Team-South at Kandahar Airfield, April 2010. Pictured left to right, are James Deane (architect), Chris Campbell (MED project manager), David Clarke (TAD), Paul Lohman (KAF planner), Mike Schweizer (architect and CH2M Hill team lead), Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Cook (ARCENT-ATL), Chris Hurst (planner/civil engineer), Rob Edgerton (estimator), Josh Kuper (civil engineer), and George Flickner (AES construction project manager). Not pictured are Maj. Peter Domahoski (ARCENT-KWT) and Patrick Huff (AES program facilitator).

Charrette Team Kicks off at KAF

On April 16, a team of architects, engineers and planners from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Afghanistan Engineer District - South (AES), Transatlantic Division (TAD), and Middle East District (MED); U.S. Army Central Command, Atlanta and Kuwait; and CH2M Hill kicked off the fiscal year 2010 Design Charrettes and fiscal year 2012 Planning Charrettes for military construction (MILCON) projects located in Regional Commands - South and West. A charrette is a final, intensive effort to finish a project, especially an architectural design project, before a deadline. The 22

projects being charretted vary widely in breadth, and include projects for utilities, command and control (C2) facilities, housing, entry control points (ECPs), and airfield ramps.

The charrettes are truly a combined, joint effort. In addition to the commands listed above, participants include representatives from the Army (U.S. Forces - Afghanistan, South), Marines (II MEF and MARCENT), Air Force (777 EPBS and USFOR-A West Engineers), and other NATO elements (such as COMKAF engineers). Engineers from Kandahar, Delaram, Dwyer, Shindand, and Herat are also represented.

The project is conducted

through a MED contract with CH2M HILL, an A/E firm based in Denver, Colo. Chris Campbell (USACE MED) manages the project. Patrick Huff (USACE AES), stationed at Kandahar, provides AES program facilitation. Maj. Peter Domahoski and Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Cook from ARCENT-Forward (Kuwait) and ARCENT-Atlanta (respectively) provide U.S. Title 10 oversight. The A/E team is led by Mike Schweizer (AIA/NCARB).

The team will be located at Kandahar airfield for the duration of the trip. An outbrief is currently scheduled for May 20. 🇦🇫

Afghanistan Safety 101

By Sharon Wilkinson-Barnes,
Safety and Occupational Health Specialist

Malaria in Afghanistan

Afghanistan Statistics

Over half of the country's estimated 26.6 million people are living in malaria-prone areas. During the warmer months of the year 50,000 to 200,000 cases of Malaria are reported in Afghanistan. Between 2000-2005, an average of 80 service members tested positive for Malaria after serving in Afghanistan.

A major cause of Malaria prophylaxis failure is the patient not adhering to prescribed treatment. Meds are available at Military Treatment Facilities. Always carry a copy of your travel orders and your Common Access Card, and wear your dog tags.

April to December is noted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as the timeframe most prevalent for exposure to malaria in Afghanistan. The CDC classifies all areas in Afghanistan below altitudes of 2,000 meters (<6,561 feet) as high for relative risk of malaria.

Humans get malaria after being bitten by an infective female Anopheles mosquito. Only the Anopheles mosquito can transmit malaria and it must have been infected through previous blood meal from an infected person.

Disease Infection

The incubation time period following an infective bite varies 7-30 days. Malaria can be categorized as uncomplicated or severe (complicated):

Uncomplicated Malaria;

* Rarely observed, malaria attack last 6-10 hours. Symptoms include:

- * A cold stage (sensation of cold, shivering);
- * A hot stage (fever, headache, vomiting and seizures in young children);

* And finally a sweating stage (sweats, return to normal temperature, tiredness).

Severe Malaria;

* Occurs when infections are complicated by serious organ failures or abnormalities in the patient's blood. Symptoms include:

- * Impairment of consciousness, seizures, coma, or other neurologic abnormalities;
- * Hemoglobin in urine (hemoglobinuria);
- * Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS);
- * Abnormalities in blood coagulation;
- * Low blood pressure by cardiovascular collapse;
- * Acute kidney failure;
- * Metabolic acidosis (excessive acidity of the

blood);

* Hypoglycemia (low blood glucose); and

* Hyperparasitemia (> 5 percent of red blood cells are infected).

Prevent Malaria

- * Take an anti-malarial drug;
 - * Prevent mosquito bites by staying indoors if possible, especially between dusk and dawn (mosquitoes that transmit malaria usually bite during this time frame);
 - * Wear long sleeve shirts and long pants when outside;
 - * Apply an insect repellent such as DEET (following instructions on label); and
 - * Seek medical attention if symptoms develop.
- The earlier medical attention is sought the better the chances are of recovery.

For more information or concerns, e-mail
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**Sharon
Wilkinson-Barnes**





Airfield project improves

A dirt landing strip on a military base on the outskirts of a remote, dusty town at the mouth of a strategic valley is once again making history.

Located at Camp Holland in Tarin Kowt, the capital of Uruzgan Province in central Afghanistan, the landing strip is used by Air Mobility Command airlifters, such as C-17s, to bring much-needed cargo to forward-deployed Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and coalition partners.

But, regardless of the type of aircraft, a lot of dirt gets kicked up. Dirt that's extremely fine – like Talcum powder or flour – causing boots

to sink down into it several inches.

Now, a U.S. Army Central Command and U.S. Air Force Central Command sponsored project being constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Afghanistan Engineer District - South (AES), will improve this vital strategic link at the Tarin Kowt Forward Operating Base (FOB).

The \$28.5 million project will consist of four parts – the landing strip itself, a large helicopter landing pad, a fixed-wing parking apron, and a cargo handling area – according to Michael E. Weiner, the resident engineer

at the AES' Tarin Kowt (TK) Resident Office.

In addition to the dirt landing strip receiving a concrete surface, it'll be lengthened to support C-17 aircraft. The new parking apron will be large enough for two C-17s to park side by side at the same time, said Weiner. And, the cargo handling area will include a large warehouse that will support the airfield.

Scheduled for completion in January 2011, the work which began in April is being done in three phases to meet its unique set of challenges. First the existing dirt landing strip will be widened to create a temporary landing strip,



support to Warfighters

Story by Brenda Beasley

Courtesy Photo

said Weiner. This is needed to satisfy the contractual requirement of maintaining a fully operational runway while improving the existing dirt surface with rigid pavement. At the same time, they'll began working on building the rotary-wing parking apron and extending the current length of the runway about 400 meters.

Second, the landing strip will be essentially cut in half, length wise, to prepare the north side and C-17 parking apron for concrete placement and finishing. "Once this is done and accepted," said Weiner, "We'll allow the aircraft to use the north side strip and C-17 apron." This

frees up space for work to began on the south side of the existing landing strip.

During the final phase, concrete will be placed on the south side, and work will begin on the cargo handling area which includes the warehouse that will house and store the equipment that's off loaded from the aircraft.

Logistical problems because of weather effects at Tarin Kowt is one of the main reasons behind the decision to improve the dirt landing strip. "It's been maintained as a dirt landing strip over the years," said Weiner, "but, because of logistical and operational needs, the Air Force is having

key landing strips paved."

From November to March, the heavy rains quickly degrade the air crews' runway condition reading (RCR), which is used to determine how much braking effort will be needed to come to a stop. RCR values of the dirt strip and wet conditions often lead to a muddy surface that could take several days to dry out. Since the landing strips' surface soil is a silty-clay mixture and expands when it gets even the smallest amount of water, the conditions get worse. "This strategic weakness causes the landing strip to be shut down quite a bit during winter months," said Maj. John M.



Photo by Brenda Beasley

AES Leadership team stands overlooking the dirt landing strip while they receive a briefing from Mike Weiner and Maj. John Raso on the airfield improvement project issues and construction sequence. Left to right: Col. Kevin Wilson, Command Sgt. Maj. John Werner, Laurel Stevens, George Flickner, Maj. Estee Pinchasin, Tech. Sgt. Junie Garnenez, Pete Perez, Mike Weiner, Joe Wade, and Maj. John Raso.

Raso, the Officer in Charge at the TK Resident Office. “The intent is to make a permanent landing strip for use throughout the entire year.”

However, such a monumental project doesn’t come without its share of unique challenges, especially when there’s no space to build a landing strip next to the existing one. “There’s a requirement that the landing strip be kept open at all times,” said Weiner, “We have to build it while it’s still in use.”

Most of the supply runs are usually handled by C-130s and choppers. When the U.S. Air Force wanted to send a huge,

Boeing C-17 GlobeMaster III, loaded with pallets, planners realized there was no room, nor equipment, for a traditional, slow off-load. So on June 23, 2009, the C-17 crew made history when they used a magic trick they learn in training. They run up the engines, release the locks [on the pallets] and then release the brakes. It’s like the magic trick where the tablecloth is ripped off the table without offsetting the dishes. Same principal — they pull the aircraft out from under the pallets.

Although leaving the landing strip open to support units that are deploying and redeploying

caused a slow project take off, Weiner is satisfied with the contractor’s progress. “I’m working with a good contractor, and I have confidence that he’ll get the work performed to a high level of quality,” he said.

Another challenge is coordinating with the different, constantly changing stakeholders. It’s a difficult process because there’s always new people and new issues. The Dutch and the Australians both have engineers and master planners who are involved in the coordination process. Then the Dutch, who are the lead nation, rotate out every four months.



Photo by Pat Ryan

Construction earth moving cut and fill activities get underway at the runway extension.



Photo by Pat Ryan

Trevor Kough (left), runway improvements project engineer (also an environmental engineer from Baltimore District) discusses runway improvements with Kayhan Suhrub on the project site.

“We’re constantly working with stakeholders to plan construction while keeping the airfield open for traffic,” said Raso. “Before I leave here, I’ll have seen my fourth rotation.”

In order to improve the landing strip and keep air traffic open, the concrete will be placed at night and literally hours later C-130s will be landing adjacent to freshly placed concrete.

They plan to cover 150 meters a day in a 12-hour window. But, with the temporary landing strip only 12 meters away, it’s unknown as to how the work will be affected. “There’s a lot of force, wind, and turbulence when an aircraft lands,” said Raso, who’s deployed from the Corps’ Baltimore District where he serves as the deputy commander. “We don’t know how it’s going to affect the curing of the concrete. It’s never been done that close.”

The earth work and other preparations will take place during the day and actual placement of concrete at night. Especially since the paver

machines can move fast enough to get out of the way for the planes to land. “I’ve been working on this project since June 2009,” said Raso. “It’s nice to see actual progress.”

Tarin Kowt has been home to several historical moments. In addition to this being the very first Military Construction (MILCON) project for the FOB, it also happens to be the very first MILCON project for the Uruzgan Province, said Weiner.

Originally a very old soviet base of operations, it was of significant strategic value to the Taliban. It was also used by the U.S. Marines and is still home for the U.S. Special Forces. The FOB is a multi-national base of Dutch, Slovenians, British, Australians, French, and Americans, with the Dutch being the lead nation. The dirt landing strip is a vital logistic link for supporting the FOB, and everyone needs to use it. “I spend a lot of time synchronizing key construction activities with military operations to minimize conflicts and coordinating contractor work with the Air Traffic Control Tower,” said Weiner, who’s deployed from the Corps’ Baltimore District, Fort Myer Resident Office, where he serves as a project engineer.

Another historical moment occurred in November 2001, when the citizens here rose up against their Taliban governor, marking the first organized Pashtun resistance against the Taliban. President Hamid Karzai, then an obscure



Photo by Pat Ryan

A material screening operation at the site is used so that materials can be reused for other site work incorporated into the airfield improvements project.

statesman, was in the region at the time trying to build an army. The Taliban launched a counter attack against the town, and met Karzai and his ragtag militia who dug in to defend the town. With the help of American Air Power, the Green Berets were able to drive the Taliban back from Tarin Kowt. This victory is regarded as the turning point for Karzai — the single battle which gave him credibility in the Southern Provinces, and among the Taliban opposition forces (including the Northern Alliance) as a credible guerrilla leader.

On July 14, 2009, the Royal Australian Air Force's giant C-17 Heavy Air Lift aircraft based at Amberley achieved

a significant milestone in support of Australian Defense Force operations and the coalition mission in Afghanistan with its first landing on the Tarin Kowt dirt strip to deliver vital stores and equipment, according to an Australian Government Department of Defense media release.

Prior to 2007, the dirt landing strip was only one of two access points for the town. Ground access to the outside was a road to the regional center of Kandahar to the south, which was subject to Taliban attacks and washouts. In March 2007, the Corps of Engineers began construction of a road from Tarin Kowt westward to Deh Rahwod

and then to Shahidi Hassas District, in the western areas of Uruzgan province. At the same time, the Corps also began paving and bridge construction to improve the road to Kandahar.

There are tactical dirt landing strips being used at several FOBs and combat outposts throughout the Uruzgan Province, but now the Tarin Kowt dirt landing strip will be the only paved one.

Once it's complete, the Dutch have discussed plans to build a passenger terminal. "In addition to providing support for the warfighter, I like that this project is something that is going to be an enduring gift, one way or another, to this province," said Weiner. 🇸🇩

Admiral hears Soldiers' concerns

Story by Brenda Beasley

Two junior enlisted Soldiers from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan Engineer District - South (AES), were invited to join Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen for dinner March 30. The buffet style dinner was held in a separate dining room at the Luxembourg Dining Facility at Kandahar Airfield for 12 people from different military branches.

"I thought it was awesome that I was chosen to go," said Sgt. Marie A. Vernon, who serves as a member of AES' Logistics Office. "It was a chance to meet with someone who can address our issues and concerns and make changes at the highest level."

After introducing himself, Mullen asked each invitee to introduce themselves. He asked what unit they were with and what they were doing at KAF. He also asked about their home unit and the component they were with there, said Vernon, who's attached to the U.S. Army 450th Movement Control Battalion out Manhattan, Kansas.

Mullen's said he always meets with higher ranking military and this was an opportunity for him to meet with the "boots on the ground" service members. He was very sincere in wanting to know if the service members had



Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, presents a coin to Sgt. Marie E. Vernon. Mullen's was accompanying a USO tour in the region with celebrities James Gandolfini and Tony Sirico from HBO's "The Sopranos," New Orleans Saint Jon Stinchcomb, and actress Rose McGowan. (DoD photo by Mass Communication Specialist Chad J. McNeeley/Released.)

any questions or issues about their deployment at KAF since he was here to hear the concerns of junior enlisted service members.

"It was an excellent opportunity to convey questions and opinions to an officer of that rank," said Spc. Daniel J. Campo, who serves on AES' Force Protection Team and is attached to the 401st Chemical Company, Boston, Mass.

Some of the service members expressed concern about the frequency of deployment. Mullen was also concerned about this and the impacts on the Soldiers' families. One Soldier said he was leaving the military because of the impact on his family. He said he hadn't seen his six-year-old for about two years. "The admiral actually supported his decision," said Vernon.

Since Mullen had visited Vernon's home state earlier in the month, she felt she was able to make a personal connection during their dinner discussions. "I liked the fact that he doesn't see a difference between Reserves, Guard, or Active Duty, because we're all fighting the same fight," said Vernon. 🇺🇸



Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, presents a coin to Spc. Daniel J. Campo. (DoD photo by Mass Communication Specialist Chad J. McNeeley/Released.)

Long road to Gypsum

Story by Lt. Col. Samantha Ross, Hafizullah Ramin and Sharon Mers

They say that “nothing in Afghanistan is easy!” Land acquisition is certainly no exception and the process that members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Afghanistan Engineers District - South (AES) Real Estate Team, Greg Stigall and Hafizullah Ramin, a new member of the AES Team who is serving as an Afghan Interpreter, went through to acquire land to build a route between forward operating base (FOB) Dwyer and Camp Leatherneck in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, is a classic example of how difficult it could have been, without the USACE initiative and critical interface with local leaders.

FOB Dwyer is the southern-most FOB occupied by Task Force Leatherneck. This FOB is the main logistical hub for the Southern Helmand River Valley and supports the numerous Combat Outposts within the Marine Expeditionary Brigade's area of operations. The current route from Camp Leatherneck to FOB Dwyer is a mixture of open desert sands and unimproved hard surface interspersed with numerous wadis. This route, on average, takes military convoys 12-16 hours to traverse. Local national convoys take from a few days to over a week due to extremely limited navigability and challenging terrain. By providing a viable main supply route between the camps, the cycle times will be greatly reduced and a more efficient, reliable resupply schedule for all classes of supply can be initiated. This route will additionally provide the Afghanistan National



Left to right: Marine Expeditionary Force Liaison Officer Maj. Mark L. Ogburn, Real Estate Specialist Gregory A. Stigall, and Interpreter Hafizullah Ramin map out the road to Gypsum.

Army (ANA) the freedom of movement from Camp Shorabak to FOB Dwyer, where a newly constructed ANA compound exists.

As this project developed, initially it was programmed as a fiscal year 2011 military construction (MILCON) project and although the entire route was 122 km., the programming document only included 40 km. of the route. The Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) leadership placed high priority on this mission and requested that USACE recommend the project to be executed with fiscal year 2010 Contingency Construction Authority (CCA) funding. This could only be done if we had land use authority.

Typically the mechanism to do this is through a land ownership validation contract. The contractor that was available to validate land ownership was swamped and when they evaluated the time and cost to conduct the Route Gypsum land validation, they quoted a minimum of eight months to do the mission at a cost of over \$3 million. This was a lose-

lose situation for the MEB, so the AES team took a totally different approach – how about leveraging the local provincial and army leaders?

Greg Stigall is the Real Estate Team Lead assigned to Helmand Area Office, in support of the MEB. He initiated a Shura concept – an official meeting between U.S. or Coalition Forces and members of the local village, province, military or police force. These are held for many reasons, but Stigall was proposing a Route Gypsum Shura between the Helmand Provincial Governor, the ANA, General Ghorri and the MEB to identify the specific route and make the required arrangements. He requested that we send an interpreter from the AES headquarters, and Ramin was selected to participate in the mission.

The following is Ramin's account of the amazing experience that resulted in a \$3 million cost savings and land acquisition that happened in two days instead of eight months, allowing the project to be reprogrammed for fiscal year 2010 CCA, in support of the MEB leadership's request.

"It was a great opportunity and it was my pleasure to translate, interpret, coordinate and advise on behalf of the U.S. Government with regard to the acquisition of land for Route Gypsum. When I arrived at the Tombstone Real Estate Office, I was provided a lot of information to absorb in just a few days. I had a lot of questions for Mr. Greg and he did a good job answering

them all. Then we prepared to set our plan into action.

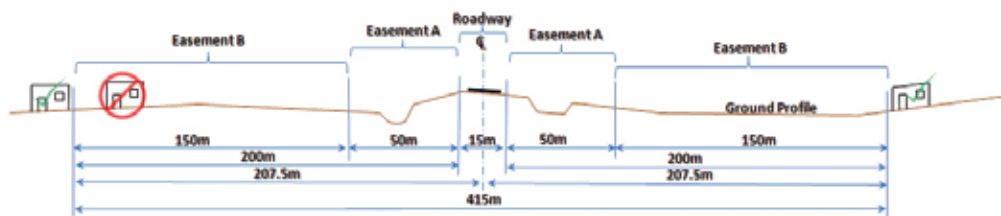
We began by preparing a presentation for the Afghan government officials from whom we would be requesting the ownership certification. We also prepared answers to all the questions that we thought might be asked during our shura with them. Mr. Greg told me that a private company had asked for \$27,000 per km. to determine the ownership of the land needed for Route Gypsum. Since the route is 122 km. long, the cost would be tremendous. I told Mr. Greg that I did not believe a private company could manage to perform the work in that area; and, if they tried, they would still need to confirm the ownership with the Afghan government records and officials.

Our survey indicated that no one lived within ten km. of the current road, 90 percent of which is sandy desert terrain. It also showed that there was no sign of agricultural activity or vegetation in this area. This type of unused land would belong to the Ministry of Agriculture of Afghanistan and even if it was private land, the government would have the right to acquire it for a road. So we set out to prove our case to the government officials.

According to the guidelines of land use agreements between the U.S. and the Afghan government, we had to go to Afghan General Ghorri in Shorabak. The General advised that we should go through the

Helmand Governor's office. He called the governor's office for us and we learned that the governor was interested in what we had to say. General Ghorri even offered to provide security and transportation to the Governor's office, however, we advised that we had our own security team who would transport us there.

Gypsum Roadway Profile Showing Easement Layouts and uses.



Roadway:

15m width of land, road surface is expected to be constructed on.

Easement A:

Is 50m strip of land running along both sides of the roadway that is to be used only by GIRA for roadway construction, drainage work, and access to roadway. No farming, construction, or private ownership of this land is permitted.

Easement B:

Is 150m strip of land running along both sides of Easement A, which is land that may be privately owned, but no buildings and other permanent features may be built upon that can restrict visual view from roadway. Private owners may use this land for agriculture and other similar purposes, but land can be taken back into GIRA lands as needed via Public Domain needs (similar to easement in US).

Mr. Greg contacted the U.S. Marines who would arrange security for our trip to the Governor's office. By the time transportation could be arranged, the Governor had left for Kabul. However, I talked to the Deputy Governor Sattar who offered us his help. Once we had verified that the Deputy Governor's signature would be acceptable on the ownership documents, we flew to Lashkar Gah. Together, with Marine Col. Fisher, we met the Deputy Governor at the Helmond Governor's guest house.

I presented and explained the presentation that Mr. Greg had prepared for the meeting. Once we were finished, the Deputy said he would like to discuss the matter with the Governor and the Director of Agriculture. An appointment for the next morning was arranged but we were unable to meet at the appointed time due to advice from our security team. Once we advised the Deputy, he graciously agreed to meet with us at a later time of day.

The next afternoon we met at the Deputy's office. Also present was the Helmand Real Estate Director, the Helmand Cartographer and the Director of Agriculture. When I began to explain the route to the directors, they told me the Deputy Governor had already explained it to them. It seemed they had already had their own meeting to discuss the matter. The Deputy Governor told us the four departments that certify land ownership were all present. As it was Friday and Afghan employees are off on Fridays, their willingness to meet with us was definitely an act of cooperation. Each of the departments present had already checked their records to see if the land required belonged to the government. Everyone present agreed that the land in question was definitely owned by the government. They were all ready to sign the ownership documents, however, the Deputy Governor asked if he could call the news media to record such an important event. We then moved to the media room where the news media covered the signing event.

Mr. Greg had been worried that the


agreement might not be reached, but I told him the Deputy Governor was a smart politician who really wanted to help the people of Helmand.

One of the reporters had a question for the U.S. Government representative. He said he was aware of a similar road which was to be built from Greshk to Lashkar Gah but it was never built. He said he hoped the same thing didn't happen with the Gypsum road. Mr. Greg's response was simply "inshala" which means "God willing." At the end of the signing ceremony the Afghan and U.S. representatives hugged each other and congratulated each other on the accomplishment of the mission. Afterward, Mr. Greg and I went back to our quarters very happy that we had achieved the desired result.

It was a great journey and experience for me to be part of that negotiation and I am looking forward to doing the same thing again in the future."

A little initiative, a dash of tenacity, some cooperation across military and country lines, and you have what the MEB G-9, Col. Jerry Fischer characterized this way:

"All – Congrats. They said it couldn't be done ... But today at 1600 hours the Deputy Governor signed all the land documents that authorized the construction of the 120 km. hardball road between Leatherneck and Dwyer. Great job by Greg and his interpreter. Only a couple of heart stoppers, but at the end the deal was done. Best is, that is all should make the evening news in Kabul ..." He stated in another message: "The Afghan leaders were so impressed by Mr. Stigall, that they had him participate in the media event at the conclusion of the signing of the deal."

So, things may not be easy in Afghanistan, ever ... but the USACE effort to negotiate in good faith and partnership with Afghan leaders is a huge step in the right direction of building relationships and conducting business in a manner that builds trust and confidence, and is one way that AES is supporting the counter-insurgency (COIN) effort in Southern Afghanistan. 

News briefs

KAF Kops reminder

From Capt. Elbert Laza, J1 OIC

Reminder from the KAF Kops: Drivers must not eat, drink, smoke, or use their cell phone when their vehicle is in motion. It's not worth a ticket folks! Be safe out there.

Big changes announced for federal hiring

from Office of Personnel Management

President Obama has directed OPM to make significant changes.

Director John Berry of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and U.S. Chief Performance Officer Jeffrey Zients announced a major overhaul of the Federal hiring process, detailing crucial reforms ordered by President Obama. Speaking at OPM headquarters alongside Department of Labor Secretary Hilda Solis and Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan, Berry detailed President Obama's initiative to bring a 21st Century approach to the Federal hiring system.

At the announcement event, Director Berry outlined steps that President Obama has taken to reform the Federal hiring and recruitment process. In his Memorandum, President Obama directed Federal agencies to:

- Dramatically reduce the time between when a job is announced

and is filled.

- Eliminate essays as an initial application requirement. Essays may still be used later in the process. Under the previous system, if an individual applied for five separate Federal jobs, he or she often needed to complete five separate sets of lengthy essays.

- Use shorter, plain-language job announcements.

- Accept resumes from applicants, instead of requiring them to submit complex applications through outdated systems.

- Allow hiring managers to choose from among a group of best qualified candidates, rather than limiting their choice to just three names, through expanded use of "category ratings."

- Notify applicants in a timely manner (and at four points in the process) through USAJobs.gov, eliminating the "black hole" that applicants often feel when they get no response to their application.

- Submit a hiring and recruitment plan for top talent to OPM by the end of this year.

- Have all Cabinet-level and Senior Administration Officials visiting universities or colleges on official business on corporate time to discuss career opportunities in the Federal service with students.

Additionally, the President directed OPM to:

- Design a government-wide plan

for recruiting and hiring qualified, diverse talent.

- Review the Federal Career Intern Program and, within 90 days, offer a recommendation to the President on its future and on providing effective pathways into the Federal service for college students and graduates.

- Work with agencies to ensure that best practices are being developed and used throughout Government.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management is also launching a web site that will continue to guide Federal agencies and hiring managers through this change at: <http://www.opm.gov/hiringreform/>.

For complete details on hiring reform and the full news release, including additional measures taken by President Obama and the Office of Personnel Management, a Video News Release and webcast of the entire press conference, please visit <http://www.opm.gov/>.

NSPS Update

From Col. Steven Roemhildt, TAD

Most of you are aware of the proposed transition date of NSPS employees to the GS (General Schedule) system. The proposed date of May 23 May is now official. Most TAD employees currently occupying NSPS positions will be transitioned on that date. TAD leadership is cognizant of the fact that the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) to GS conversion is a major event and may be creating a bit of uncertainty for our staff. Let me assure you that TAD senior leaders are actively taking steps, within the Command Group and Human Resource arena, to make the transition as transparent and seamless as possible for all employees. Please review the Army NSPS site at <http://cpol.army.mil/library/general/nsps/>. This site will provide a "What's New with NSPS" timeline. An additional, more in-depth resource is <http://www.cpmso.d.mil/nsps>.



For a brief moment, AES Commander Col. Kevin Wilson joined the Mother's Day Celebration hosted by the AES Employee Morale Team to thank all of the mother's serving in combat and their families who support them being deployed.



Moving in



Wilfredo
Anderson



Robert
Baldwin



Michael
Baxter



Jeffrey
Blanford



Roy Brase



Charles
Bulla



Nettie Carter



Warren
Colburn



Catherine
Dewar



1st Sgt.
Harvey Diaz



Robert
Duncan



Sgt. 1st
Class Diane
Edwards



John Eugino



Adrian
Gavins



John
Gildersleeve



Maj. Kimberly
Giles



Phyllis Giles



Arnie
Guillermo



Richard
Horton



Richard
Jamar



Gregory
Japalucci



Ben Jenkins



Joe King



Guy
Kuroiwa



Oscar Lopez



Jack
Markland



Robert
Marshall



Teresa
Martinez



Claire
McDonald



William
McKenty



Jason
McWilliams



Thomas
Moore



Ajmal Niaz



Michael
Osborne



Frank Pierce



Maj.
Anthony
Riley



John
Rowland



Richard
Sallans



Roland
Schumate



Earl Wagner



Capt.
Stephen
Walters



Master Sgt.
Michael
Wanner



Sharon
Wilkinson-
Barnes



Capt.
Samantha
Bebb



Rick Mers



Maj. Chris
Pewterbaugh



Sgt. 1st
Class Fabio
Vallejo



1st Sgt.
Charles
Yepa



Tech. Sgt.
Paul
Hastings

*Photos unavailable at
press time: Staff Sgt.
Bryan Alfaro, Tech.
Sgt. Scott Cleveland,
Sgt. James Hoak,
Thomas Ingram, Sgt.
Chris Lewis, Maj.
Andrew Olson, Capt.
Gary Phillips, Maj.
Thomas Snow, and Lt.
Col. Randall Wheeler.*

Moving out

Jesse Allen
Pamela Amie
Senior Master
Sgt. Jack Bivens
Jeffrey Brewer
Master Sgt. Daniel
Brown
Royce Colley
John Cominotto

Alberto Cruzan
Kathy Driskill
Darren Dyer
Michelle Dzik
Alden Foote
Douglas Foster
Tech. Sgt. Junie
Garnenez
Douglas Grant

Charles Green
Staff Sgt. Kwasi
Gyamfi
Paul Hicks
Jonathan Jellema
William Lee
Michael Martin
Tech. Sgt. Daniel
Martinez

Jesse McKee
Milton Murphy
Lt. Col. Bryan
Opperman
David Peng
Maj. Estee Pinchasin
Lt. Col. Nicholas
Rich
Gregory Rizzi

JoAnn Selves
Mark Shore
Capt. Theodore
Sotoropolis
Scott Stegmann
Sgt. Jeffrey Stivason
Capt. Darren Wajdak
Lagaria Waters
Vivian Wippler